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Karney Armstrong

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy in 2007 as a linguist before becoming a medic. I was medically discharged in 2018.

I deployed numerous times onboard ships.

Current occupation: I am completing Yoga Teacher Training and Trauma Sensitive Yoga Teacher Training. I am passionate about what yoga and meditation can provide as I have found both to be life changing for my physical and mental health. My goal is to teach veterans, first responders and their children.

Age: 35

Home town: My parents were in the army, so I lived in many locations including Ingleburn, Wodonga, Watsonia, Swanbourne and Nowra.

Current town: Baldivis, Western Australia

Competing in: Archery, athletics and table tennis

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have bilateral hip injuries and Post Traumatic Stress from my service.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Training for the Invictus Games has helped my rehabilitation by getting me up and out of my house, as I tend to struggle with getting out and socialising with others.

Sport background: I played netball at a representative level when I was living in Wodonga, Victoria and A grade for most of my high school years.

What is your greatest achievement to date? My two boys, Hadley and Spencer. They remind me what is important in life and everyday make me want to be a better version of myself.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? I first applied for the Invictus Games in 2017 after having a conversation with a patient of mine who had previously represented Australia at the games. Although I am now out of the navy, after four years of applying I have made the team to hopefully show others the healing power of sport. Another reason I applied was to teach and show my boys that it doesn't matter what happens to you in life; you may have a 'special brain' like mummy or you might have only one leg; if you think positive and believe you can achieve whatever it is you wish to achieve, you will! I have absolutely loved having my boys grow up with positive role models who they have met through my Invictus Games journey.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Success will be standing on the athletics track wearing the Australian uniform with my dad and sons watching. This represents years

of rehabilitation for both my hips, not to mention the mental strength it has taken to get me back running.

What does unconquered mean to you? Unconquered means never giving up on yourself and pushing yourself through all life's challenges as they present themselves.

Mark Armstrong

ADF service: I was in the Australian Army, the Royal Australian Infantry Corps (RAINF) 1987-1989, and the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps (RAAMC) 1989-1999. I deployed to Rwanda in 1994 and 1995 and was awarded our unit Meritorious Unit Citation.

Current occupation: I am a proud Gamilaroi man (Aboriginal) who is involved with helping other indigenous people through many different organisations and sporting teams. I volunteer with my local Rural Fire Brigade.

Age: 53

Home town: Brisbane, Queensland

Current town: Brisbane, Queensland

Competing in: Archery, sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have many muscular skeletal (physical) injuries, an acquired brain injury, Functional Neurological Disorder (FND), mefloquine toxicity (permanent adverse reaction to an anti-malaria drug) as well as visual and psychological injuries. I had my 35th surgery earlier this year and after the Games I will have two spinal stimulator implants inserted into my back to deal with daily headaches, migraines, back pain and sciatic pain.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? I have had to change my sports to fit in with my current medical conditions. Although I am unable to compete in the sports I did previously, I have adapted to sports that allow me to feel good about myself whilst still being challenging. Sport has helped me to accept that I am not able to do certain activities I once could. I am more at ease with myself and others now.

Sport background: Over the years I have played and refereed touch football, rugby league, AFL, cricket, gridiron, competed in triathlons, mountain bike racing, obstacle course races and adventure races. I manage a National Indigenous Football team. I partnered with my daughter to compete in six-hour Rogains and six-hour Adventure (multi-sport) races. Jasmine was in the 9-13 year old category and I was 43-47 category. I rode my last 24-hour mountain bike race when I was 47 but have had to give up all my racing due to ongoing pain and old injuries.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Being a father to two beautiful children and watching them both grow to be well-rounded individuals who are academic, sports and community minded. Overcoming medical adversity and being able to be a better husband, father and person. Military-wise there is too much to cover.

Why did you apply for the Invictus Games? As a volunteer with Team Rubicon Australia (Disaster Relief Australia) at Invictus Games Sydney 2018, I witnessed the camaraderie within the competing teams and felt inspired to be a part of that in 2020. Competing in the Invictus Games The Hague 2022 was amazing and I wanted to help guide new teammates through the experience.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Qualifying for the team is already success for me. Being able to compete against other veterans on an international stage, with my family there to support and cheer me on, regardless of the result is a huge achievement. Medals have never been important, it's the overall journey that is most valuable.

What does unconquered mean to you? Pretty simple really - play fair, be nice, give your all and don't give up.

Craig Ball

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in 1997 as a Reservist Infantryman. I passed selection to become a Commando in 2000 and served at 1st Commando Regiment before discharging in 2005.

I rejoined the Australian Army in 2006 as a Signaller. I deployed to Afghanistan in 2010 and 2012 as a Platoon Signaller and then a Communications Mentor. My second deployment was a career highlight as I was able to support the successful completion of the communications capability from our base in Tarin Kowt reaching over 200kms. This deployment allowed me to develop a career in consulting and change management following my discharge in 2014.

Current occupation: I am a Change Manager to government agencies and a mental health and empowerment mentor. I published a book titled 'Reclaim Your Power' in 2022. I also deliver mental health and resilience programs.

Age: 49

Home town: Sydney, New South Wales

Current town: Kanwal, New South Wales

Competing in: Archery, indoor rowing and sitting volleyball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have chronic Post Traumatic Stress, generalised anxiety disorder, alcohol use disorder, major depressive disorder as well as physical injuries including tinnitus, degenerative disease in the thoracic spine, hearing loss, right knee strain, stress fracture on my right foot and achilles tendonitis.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? The rowing machine, circuit training and running have helped me clear my head. I find the rower acts as a pump to expel negative energy from my body which is really quite profound sometimes. I get a grounding feeling from heavy weights. Yoga has been vital allowing negative energy from following traumatic experiences to leave my body.

Sport background: I played rugby growing up and skateboarded into my twenties. While serving I did swimming and I am hoping competing in indoor rowing will help me get into surfboat rowing with my local surf club. I would like to get into archery longer term as well.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? To be part of the Defence community once again and be around like minded people. To be part of a team striving towards a common goal and hopefully raise awareness around men's mental health. I want to be able to support the people I have been lucky enough to be able to train with.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Competing, doing my best and supporting all my teammates however possible.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Thriving despite my psychological challenges, getting married and having our three children.

In business, writing my book 'Reclaim Your Power', as it's a culmination of the last 21 years of work in self-improvement and helping others to improve their mental health.

What does unconquered mean to you? Being able to accept reality without being resigned to the negative aspects of it. Having a firm belief, you can have a transformative impact on your outcomes and your reality.

James Alexander Barker

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army as a Reservist in 1992 before transferring to the Regular Army in 1994. I worked as an Army Chef at Lavarack Barracks supporting Army personnel and deployed on exercises alongside allied troops from the United States Marines, Navy and Army.

Current occupation: I work full time as a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Service Delivery Planner.

Age: 49

Home town: Glenthompson, Victoria

Current town: Adelaide, South Australia

Competing in: Cycling, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? Permanent physical disability, above knee amputation, and a mild head injury as a result of a car accident.

What role has sport played in rehabilitation? Being involved in team sports during rehabilitation has helped me set targets and goals that I need to achieve.

Sport background: Growing up in a small country town in western Victoria I did a lot of different sports including AFL, cricket, tennis and swimming. I enjoyed competing in team sports from a young age.

I currently compete in wheelchair football for Sturt Football Club and won the South Australian National Football League in 2022. I compete in wheelchair basketball in the South Australia wheelchair social league.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Learning to walk again after my injury and being accepted to represent Australia at the Invictus Games.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? To be able to participate in team sports on the world stage representing Australia and to show others if you dare to believe in yourself anything is possible. I wanted to demonstrate gratitude, mindfulness and empathy.

What will success like for you at the Games? Being part of Team Australia in Dusseldorf and supporting everyone competing.

What does unconquered mean to you? To never give up and give 110% at everything you set your mind to.

Able Seaman Boatswains Mate Cooper Blackwood

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy in May 2018 as a Boatswains Mate which ensures the smooth day-to-day security, safety, maintenance and operations of ships. I deployed as part of the Indo-Pacific Endeavor in 2019. I am currently posted to HMAS Kuttabul in port services.

Age: 25

Home town: Rockhampton, Queensland

Current town: Eastgardens, Sydney, New South Wales

Competing in: Swimming, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I dived into a pool and hit my head on the bottom. I instantly fractured and dislocated my C5 C6 vertebra, immediately paralysing myself from my chest down including my hands, resulting in a bad spinal cord injury.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has played a massive role in my rehabilitation. I absolutely love any code of sport. Even when I was bed bound not being able to sit up, I could still keep my mind busy watching sport on tv in the hospital. I am a big Parramatta Eels fan. My biggest goal throughout my entire rehabilitation program was to get back to playing golf as I had a brand new set of golf irons still in the box that I got for Christmas the same year I broke my neck.

Sport background: I grew up playing a lot of sport including touch football, touch rugby league, soccer, futsal and golf but my main sport was swimming at a national level.

My greatest sporting moment is beating the boys in a round of golf one year post my accident.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Being able to not only walk but also being able to somewhat run again.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? I have seen the program and what it's done for others in previous years. I haven't had the opportunity to participate in team sport due to the nature of my injury and thought it would be a great way to get back to a competitive environment and push myself further in my rehabilitation.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Being able to go away and compete in a competitive environment once again, connecting with other nations from around the world, making new friends along the way, supporting, and encouraging my fellow teammates and having my mother and father there to watch me.

What does unconquered mean to you? To better yourself and rehabilitate whilst embracing the opportunities at the same time.

[Erin Brigden](#)

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in October 2014 as a Fitter Armourer and medically discharged in early 2023.

Current occupation: Mum to my two children Phoenix and Mia, two kelpies Diesel and Pearl and wife to husband Ryan.

Age: 29

Home town: Shellharbour, New South Wales

Current town: Brisbane, Queensland

Competing in: Indoor rowing, powerlifting and swimming

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have a ligament tear and degeneration in my left wrist, Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) in both hands and mental health issues.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? I have always relied on physical activity to manage my mental health. The more I keep at it, the stronger, happier and more confident I felt. It's my safe place, where I feel capable and centered. Amongst all the things I couldn't control, I felt I could always control my approach to exercise.

Sport background: I competed in swimming at high school and tried other sports such as touch footy, rugby league and karate. The last 10 years has been mostly weight training, leisure swimming and horse riding.

What is your greatest achievement to date? My children; Phoenix and Mia.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? I watched both the 2018 and 2020 Invictus Games and seeing the comradery and strength shown to overcome such adversity was inspiring. Fitness is my go-to for rehabilitation and the Invictus Games are perfectly aligned. I love having a goal to aim for and thought this was a great opportunity to test my potential amidst recovery.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Being selected as part of the team is already a huge success in itself, but winning for me will surpass any expectation and doing the best I can. I cannot wait to cheer on my fellow team members and enjoy the excitement of this opportunity with them.

What does unconquered mean to you? It means unbroken; despite overwhelming adversity, its rebuilding yourself back stronger each time.

Able Seaman Electronics Technician Taryn Dickens

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy in 2017 as a Weapons Rate Electronics Technician. I am currently posted to HMAS Ship Harman. I am the junior sailor representative on the Navy Diversity and Inclusion Council.

Age: 40

Hometown: Brisbane, Queensland

Current Town: Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Competing in: Cycling, powerlifting and rowing

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I am vision impaired, and I am sensitive to light which has led to depression and anxiety.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? There is no rehabilitation available for my vision loss, but sport has given me routine, consistency and a direction to focus on, keeping my mind in check. Having goals has meant I can push myself which I find very rewarding.

Sport background: Growing up I played soccer, rugby league and rugby union. In my twenties I did kickboxing and cycling. I have been a hiker/mountain climber enthusiast since my early twenties and have done Ice Climbing in Kosciuszko National Park.

I am currently in the ADF Cycling Club and the Canberra Vikings Cycling Club. I competed at the National Track Masters Championships 2022. I also started nordic skiing last year.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Turning my vision loss into another experience to learn from and finding the courage to be open and honest about my experiences with mental health. This has given others the strength, courage and permission to talk about their experiences. Courage is contagious.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? With my sights set on the 2026 Winter Paralympics I felt the Invictus Games would be a great place for me to learn how to be me, a competitor with a vision impairment. I have not travelled far or spent much time around other wounded, injured or ill people since my diagnosis. I am very excited to learn from other competitors and settle into being a competitor comfortable in my own skin while being supported by understanding people.

What will success look like for you at the Games? I feel like I have already succeeded with the friends I made at the first training camp. I am excited for the added bonus of making even more mates during the Games.

What does unconquered mean to you? That being less able doesn't mean you are less able.
Impairments will not beat me

Justin Donnelly

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in 1994 as a Commando. I deployed to Afghanistan and East Timor and worked on the Sydney Olympics. I discharged in 2016.

Current occupation: Retired. I am a father to my two girls, Jordan, 17 and Jade, 14.

Age: 47

Home town: Port Adelaide, South Australia

Current town: Toowong, Queensland

Competing in: Cycling, swimming and wheelchair basketball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have a number of parachuting and combat related bombing and shooting injuries as well as Post Traumatic Stress.

I was in a motorcycle accident racing in the United Arab Emirates. I broke 60% of my body. My brain injury was that bad I should have not survived; three parts of my brain were left dead.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? It has helped me achieve goals and given me motivation to further succeed.

Sport background: I started playing Aussie Rules and dirt bike riding in high school. In the Army I played rugby league, rugby union, golf and did road cycling.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Being selected for the Invictus Games and completing a number of rides including City to the Gold Coast twice after my accident.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? I wanted to represent Australia in a new way.

What will success look like for you at the Games? I'm not looking for a win or a podium finish, I just want to get out on the field and compete. If I'm last, I'm last.

What does unconquered mean to you? It does not matter how broken I am. Every day is a blessing and I am unconquered. I have overcome so many hurdles in my life. I must press forward every day to achieve my goals.

These goals can at times feel unachievable. You take a step back, rethink and then find another avenue.

Francine Dudfield

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army as a Medic in 2004. During my career I deployed to the Middle East and the South Pacific. I enjoyed many aspects of my military service including being trained as a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear Medic, participating in the Military Skills Competition and having the opportunity to complete a specialist course with NSW Ambulance.

Current occupation: Following my career in the ADF I have worked as a nurse and a mental health support worker. Currently, I am completing a Master of Clinical Psychology with my primary research interest being the mental health and wellbeing of our current and former military and emergency service personnel and their families.

Age: 37

Home town: Melbourne, Victoria

Current town: Melbourne, Victoria

Competing in: Sitting volleyball, indoor rowing, and powerlifting.

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have chronic pain from lower back and lower limb issues.

Sport background: I have always loved playing sport. Throughout my life I have participated in many sports including AFL, hockey, soccer, boxing, CrossFit, swimming, and running.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has helped me improve my fitness and self-discipline and build my resilience.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Motherhood, undoubtedly, is and always will be my greatest achievement.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? I miss playing sport, but I don't miss the pain and long recovery that usually follows. Invictus Games offered an opportunity to form new social connections, learn new skills and have fun while competing on an international level. Being part of Team Australia will allow me to enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of sport.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Leaving the Games with memories I can cherish and inspirational stories I can share with my family and friends.

What does unconquered mean to you? Having a positive growth mindset that encompasses patience, tolerance, understanding and compassion towards myself and others.

Xavier Green

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in 2012, as an Armored Corps Cavalryman. I deployed to the Middle East, where I was employed as a Crew Commander for a Bushmaster. I medically discharged in 2021.

Current occupation: I'm studying a degree in law, while working casually in a BBQ store to help cover the mortgage. My partner Samantha and I have a three year old boy called Jensen and an 11 month old daughter named Maeve.

Age: 32

Home town: Gosford, New South Wales

Current town: Adelaide, South Australia

Competing in: Sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have bulging discs in my spine, which led to back surgery in 2019 along with a blockage in my spinal cord. I also have arthritis in various joints.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? I was playing a decent amount of wheelchair sports in 2021, and it was nice just to feel competitive again. To get back something back that I had lost by not playing rugby.

Sport background: I first started playing AFL in 2005, but a year later, I found my true love of rugby league, which I played solidly from 2007-2018.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Having the whole set of the first Pokemon cards. A close second would be being a dad.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? I like being competitive. I thought it would be good to be around not only people with similar situations, but similar backgrounds as well.

What will success look like for you at the Games? It would be nice to get the chocolates. But honestly, just knowing I can hand on heart say that I gave it my all.

What does unconquered mean to you? Never letting something that could be considered grounds for holding you back, actually hold you back.

I also wanted to show my kids there are different opportunities available, no matter your situation.

Danielle Hale

ADF service: I joined the Army Reserve in 1989 as part of the Melbourne University Regiment as a Regimental Signaller and then as a Storeman. I transferred to the Royal Australian Navy in 1998 as an Aviation Technician Airframe. I deployed operationally before becoming a Weapons Aviation Engineering Officer. I transferred to reserves in 2013 and was medically discharged in 2019.

Current occupation: I am retired from the military. My husband Wayne and I have a son Luke, and an Assistance Dog, 'Poppy'. In my spare time I play wheelchair sports and volunteer with Surf Life Saving.

Age: 51

Home town: Melbourne, Victoria

Current town: Angle Vale, South Australia

Competing in: Indoor rowing, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have extensive issues with my spine and spinal cord compression. I have Fibromyalgia which causes muscle spasms, especially when I am anxious and after exercise. Years of chronic pain and depression affected my work, social and family life resulting in total withdrawal from everything. I received a lot of help from my husband, son and medical professionals and my Assistance dog, Poppy. Poppy has been an enormous help to me, as she knows what to do and when to do it. Having her with me is amazing.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? After moving to South Australia I approached the Invictus Pathways Program. I wanted to improve my cardio fitness and strength. Through the program I connected with other veterans and students who were keen to help me out. I was introduced to wheelchair sports which has gradually pulled me out of my house. Through doing these activities my social connections have increased and I enjoy playing with my teammates.

Sport background: I used to play team sports including, cricket, basketball and touch football. During my service I did triathlons and marathons. As my medical conditions got worse, I stopped all sport except for some regular swimming.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Watching my son grow up. My greatest sporting achievement was swimming across the Dardanelles in Turkey in 2019, raising funds for Soldier On.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? In the ADF you represent Australia every day, whenever you put on the uniform. After being medically discharged, I lost this sense of pride both in myself and in general. I always believed I was going to serve in the ADF until retirement age, so I felt as though my time was cut short. It has been a lifelong dream to represent

Australia in a sport. My childhood dream was to be an Olympic cyclist and speedskater. So, I applied to hopefully fulfill my dream and be part of a team to share those winnings highs. I am not the fastest or strongest, but I will give all I can to help.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Success, to me, is giving my best efforts and having fun playing with those around me. In doing this, if I can help someone else overcome and achieve their goal, I'll be happy.

What does unconquered mean to you? It's a sense of self. It's all relative to each person. Having the guts to face the challenges in your day and the courage to request help when needed to complete these challenges.

Shaun Hillman (Hilly)

ADF Service: I joined the Australian Army in 2010 as an Infantryman. I transferred to the Royal Australian Corps of Transport in 2011 before discharging in 2013.

Current occupation: I work for the Department of Correctional Services South Australia.

Age: 31

Home town: South Australia

Current town: Adelaide, South Australia

Competing in: Cycling, rowing and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? Bilateral Achilles Tendonitis, which has made certain activities difficult but has led to pursuing cycling as a form of exercise.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? It has played a huge role in keeping up my fitness and assisting with my mental health.

Sport background: Before my injury I played hockey but since my injury I have taken up cycling as a sport. This has allowed me to continue exercising and socialising.

What is your greatest achievement to date? My greatest sporting achievement was being able to complete the 12 hours revolve in a team of four cyclists in 2022.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? To meet likeminded people and to reignite the drive to compete again and represent Australia.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Pride and accomplishment, but I believe I have already won by being given the opportunity to complete in the Invictus Games.

What does unconquered mean to you? Being able to overcome barriers and not giving up when times get tough.

[Ainsley Hooker](#)

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Corps of Transport in the Australian Army in 2007 as a driver. I medically discharged in 2013.

Current occupation: Mum to two beautiful children, my son Luke, who is 11 and my daughter Isabelle, who is five. I am a wife to my amazing husband Jayson who I met in the army at a holding platoon and have been happily married for 14 years. I am also studying to become a kindergarten teacher.

Age: 36

Home town: Brisbane, Queensland

Current town: Giru, Queensland

Competing in: Athletics, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? In 2007 I sustained a bad ankle injury. Following failed surgeries, I was left with chronic pain and a dying foot and ankle for 13 years and ultimately became a below-knee amputee.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport is my love but for many years I sat at home and could not move. The choice to become an amputee was hard and took a lot. Being involved in wheelchair rugby has been amazing - the joy and happiness from meeting new people, competing and training has really brought me back from death. I feel alive again and have a new drive to push myself further.

Sport background: Sport has played a massive role in my childhood. I began with Surf Life Saving at Burleigh Heads Mowbray Park when I was eight. Every weekend I spent in the sun, sand and surf until I joined the Army.

After becoming an amputee in 2020, I was shown wheelchair rugby and was selected to play in the North Queensland Marlins at the state cup and won. Being able to play sports as an amputee was eye-opening and the most amazing experience. Being able to be involved and meet amazing people makes discovering who you are again all worthwhile.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? I applied for the Invictus Games to prove to myself that by working hard on my mental and physical health I could improve and be ready to compete. I wanted to get out of the comfort of my own house and explore, while meeting amazing current and ex-serving ADF members that are going through many of the same challenges.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Winning would be amazing. But to me, being part of the Australian team is already success.

What does unconquered mean to you? That my amputation is not a death sentence, rather a new beginning.

Alex Jay

ADF service: I was formally in the Australian Army.

Current occupation: I am currently studying law and am an IT, networking and programming graduate.

Home town: New South Wales

Current town: New South Wales

Competing in: Athletics, indoor rowing and sitting volleyball

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Exercise is a very important part of my life. Combined with therapeutic interventions, I have been able to maintain health and fitness to assist in my recovery and pain management.

Sport background: I was a champion athlete in short distance running. From a young age and I began training in martial arts (Taekwondo, Muay Thai, BJJ, Kickboxing).

Given the nature of my injuries, my greatest sporting moment would be running a 100m sprint to qualify for the first time in six years.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Knowing not to 'let go too soon or hang on too long.'

Why did you apply for the Invictus Games? To aid in my recovery, connect with and support wounded, injured and ill veterans on their rehabilitation journey.

What will success look like for you at the Games? 'Everyone wants to feel like a winner, and feeling like a winner requires that you win.' Here, at the games, we are all winners. This is success.

What does unconquered mean to you? It resonates with the meaning behind my friend Jarrod Kent's quote: "Broken Never Beaten." It also resonates with a quote from my friend Jacob Dean Biddick who recently passed away: "I've always been a fighter. If you tell me I can't, I'll die trying to prove you wrong"

[Ryan Kelly](#)

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy in 2001 and became a Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving Officer. I have seen active service in the Middle East, Solomon Islands as well as Northern Australian waters in border protection.

Most recently I was the Deputy Director in Future Navy Workforce Planning for Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving. I speak fluent Japanese and have been frequently involved in engagements with Japan over the course of my career. I live with my dear partner, Brandi, and our four children, Kai, Quinten, Cameron and Koa. I discharged in August 2023.

Age: 40

Home town: Port Macquarie, New South Wales

Current town: Port Macquarie, New South Wales

Competing in: Archery, sitting volleyball and swimming

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I suffered a life-altering spinal injury in 2019 while on an overseas operation dealing with unexploded remnants of war. I do my best in dealing with numerous other challenging health conditions.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has been integral in my rehabilitation, from both a physical and psychological perspective. It serves as an outlet, an escape, as well as being a crucial component in maintaining mobility and functionality.

Sport background: I grew up in and around the water. Surfing, swimming, athletics and surf life saving, as well as other team sports.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Becoming a father.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? I wanted to surround myself with people experiencing similar challenges, to both learn and to potentially help, if able.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Simply participating and feeling the camaraderie through my involvement. The reiteration of the fact 'it's not just me' resonates with me each and every time I hear from one of my fellow team mates.

What does unconquered mean to you? Regardless of what life can throw at us, it is within us to overcome it all.

[Daniel King](#)

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in 2010. I was a late starter; my oldest son Ryan thought it would be a good idea for me and him to join together. I worked in the Armored Corp (Cavalry) and my son was an Infantryman. I medically discharged earlier this year.

Current occupation: Ammunition supplier

Home town: Sydney, New South Wales

Current town: Emu Plains, New South Wales

Competing in: Cycling, powerlifting and swimming

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have multiple service-related musculoskeletal injuries which has led to mental health problems. I have Plantar Fasciitis in both heels. I experience chronic pain all day every day.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has always been a huge part of my life. I was playing competitive touch football and golf up until my injuries stopped me. I thought my sporting life was over until I was introduced to the Adaptive Sports Program. This has given me a new outlook and trying some different sports has helped me both mentally and physically since my surgery.

Sport background: I was a competitive swimmer in my teens and then transitioned into water polo in my late teens and early twenties, both to a high representative level. I then started playing touch football and got to a high representative level both as a civilian and serving member. I have played and participated in many sports, with snow skiing being a sport I love but not in a competitive nature, plus indoor cricket and mixed netball, to name a few. I am currently playing competition golf which is my new sporting love.

What is your greatest achievement to date? It was probably joining the Army. I wish I had joined much earlier and could stay in a bit longer. It is easily the best job I have ever had.

Why did you apply for the Invictus Games? My rehabilitation coordinator thought it would be good for me to apply to help with my rehabilitation. She knew how much I loved sport and could see I was disappointed that I thought I would not be able to play sport following my injuries. Thank you, Giselle!

What will success look like for you at the Games? Being selected is success for me. Finding out my sporting life was not over and seeing how others have adapted to their disabilities showed me I can still enjoy sport and life. That is success.

What does unconquered mean to you? I agree with the Collins English Dictionary, i.e. 'not able to be overcome or defeated'.

To me, it means my injuries can't stop me from doing things I love. Being unconquerable lies within yourself, being conquerable lies with your enemy.

Flight Sergeant Nathan King

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 1996. I have spent the majority of my career supporting the C-130 Hercules Aircraft and deployed to the Middle East Region in 2004 and 2006.

Current occupation: Aircraft Technician

Home town: Penrith, New South Wales

Current town: Penrith, New South Wales

Competing in: Athletics, sitting volleyball and swimming

What is the nature of your injury or illness? Following complications from a damaged thigh playing soccer, I suffered compartment syndrome in my left thigh resulting in skeletal muscle breakdown. I was in intensive care for six weeks. I lost two muscles in my left quad which required extensive operations and skin grafts. I have restricted movement in my left leg.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? It has helped to re-focus my training to assist my rehabilitation. I have met a whole bunch of inspirational people I wouldn't have otherwise had the opportunity to meet.

Sport background: I have played soccer my whole life. I represented Air Force and Australian Defence Force teams, but I like having a go at all sports.

What is your greatest achievement to date? I'm proud of my family. They are tough, resilient and kind.

Why did you apply for the Invictus Games? I competed in Invictus Games The Hague 2020. The experience and the exposure was great. I want to compete in Dusseldorf to mentor the new competitors, push myself further, inspire my community and demonstrate what I can do by 'overcoming adversity'.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Just to get there and experience it again is going to be great. But the benchmarks have been set from The Hague, so I need to at least beat those. I am adding the 100m run to my program, so to cross that line will be my gold.

What does unconquered mean to you? Overcoming adversity, don't let it beat you, get on with your life and strive to always lead from the front.

Stephen Lockwood

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in 2008. I deployed to East Timor in 2009 and Afghanistan in 2013. I discharged in 2019.

Current occupation: I am studying psychology cognitive neuroscience.

Age: 34

Home town: Henty New South Wales

Current town: Freeling, South Australia

Competing in: Archery, powerlifting and table tennis

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I suffered a back injury and have multiple musculoskeletal injuries as a result of my service.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport gives me a goal or objective to dedicate myself to. Something to achieve and succeed in.

Sport background: I have always played Australian sports; I have had wins with cricket and strongman but playing sport with some of my closest mates while working in the ADF is a highlight.

What is your greatest achievement to date? I was lucky enough to compete in the Warrior Games in Chicago 2017. I have won competitions and grand finals, best and fairest trophies, but that was a real experience for me.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? I wanted to prove to myself that I could.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Doing the best I can and being the biggest cheerleader for everyone else who is out there killing it, regardless of their home country.

What does unconquered mean to you? It means coming back stronger, pushing through, and getting on with it.

Kurt Ludke

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Army in 1998 as an Infantryman. I deployed to East Timor, Afghanistan three times, and Iraq. I also participated in multiple training courses within the pacific region and the United Arab Emirates. I discharged in 2018.

Age: 42

Home town: Merredin, Western Australia

Current town: Sydney, New South Wales

Competing in: Powerlifting, sitting volleyball and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have Post Traumatic Stress, depression and psychological injuries, multiple skeletal and physical issues and deteriorating vision due to an extremely rare genetic disorder called Pseudo Xanthoma Elasticum (PXE).

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport and training keep me from deteriorating both physically and more importantly mentally. The calmness and sense of achievement during and post physical activity is a balm for my mind. Sport connects me to the two decades I spent in service, in the form of teams, mateship and shared experience.

Sport background: I was a competitive football player (AFL and rugby) and enjoy any sports that are team related. I was never a solo athlete outside of boxing and martial arts; however, both those sports were community and team orientated.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Surviving and being the best I can be for my family and recently completing my Masters in Business Administration at the University of New South Wales.

Why did you apply for the Invictus Games? Close friend and former Australian Team member Peter Rudland inspired me to do so. Seeing the 'give back' he has been able to return into the military community is something I hope to do as well.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Lifting those around me to break through their own boundaries and limitations and ensuring a true team with cohesiveness and morale through the Games.

What does unconquered mean to you? It means not succumbing to the darkness, to not be defined by my injuries and illnesses and to rise above challenges not experienced by the bulk of the population. To enjoy each day as it completes its cycle and to support my fellow competitors around me.

Bradley Mazzaferri

ADF service: I loved every minute of my career in the army, it was my life dream, it definitely had its moments, ups and downs but it has helped shape the man I am today. I discharged in 2019.

Current occupation: I am determined to return to university, I started last year but have deferred until later this year.

Age: 32

Current town: Greenock, Adelaide, South Australia

Home town: Sydney, New South Wales

Competing in: Cycling, sitting volleyball and swimming

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I choose not to focus on my injury and illness, instead I focus on how I can use sport to help my rehabilitation and recovery. Sport is what motivates me to get out of bed every day and gives me the motivation to keep moving forward.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has been a motivator and distraction for me, it gives me something to focus on and work towards. Sport supports both my physical and mental health, gives me a sense of belonging and connects me with my local community. It helps keep my life in balance. Cycling gives me structure, emotional challenges, purpose and the motivation to get out of bed and better myself every day.

What is your greatest achievement to date? My military service. I am proud to have served my country alongside lifelong friends and proud of everything we were able to achieve.

Why did you apply for the Invictus Games? I wanted to be pushed both physically and mentally and thought the Games would provide that for me. I liked the idea of being able to represent Australia alongside others who have served, and who, like me have challenges they are working to overcome.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Getting to the start line is success for me. I don't care if I don't win, to be part of an incredible event like the Games is success.

What does unconquered mean to you? No matter how hard things get, no matter what challenges present themselves, you keep going. It can be hard, it may feel like you will never get to the other side but you put one foot in front of the other and keep going, that's unconquered. I am the master of my fate and the captain of my soul.

Able Seaman Jamie McGlinchey

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy in May 2019 as a Boatswains Mate. I deployed on HMAS Supply to Hawaii, I'm currently posted to Port Services East as a Crane and Rigging Operator.

Age: 30

Home town: Edens Landing, Queensland

Current town: Matraville, New South Wales

Competing in: Athletics, cycling and swimming

What is the nature of your injury or illness? Multiple knee injuries including tears, nerve damage and osteoarthritis. I have completely severed ligaments in my hand and have adjustment disorder with depression and anxiety.

Sport background: I played rugby league from 2000 - 2012. I competed in CrossFit from 2015-2021 and Jiu Jitsu from 2015-2017. My greatest sporting achievement is winning two gold medals at the Southeast Australian Brazilian jiu-jitsu competition in 2017.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has helped greatly with my rehabilitation. I use sport to try and gain the confidence I once had in my knee.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Making it through an extremely dark mental health battle and making the Australian Invictus Games team.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? I applied so I could give myself something to work towards with my rehabilitation which ultimately gives me a sense of drive to push myself.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Proving wrong all the people who said I can't and never will return to a certain level of fitness. Making the Australian Team proves I have already won.

The biggest success will be standing on that stage with everyone else who has put in countless hours behind closed doors with injuries and setbacks to represent Australia.

What does unconquered mean to you? To never be beaten or to give up.

Michael

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in 2004 as a soldier and am still serving at the moment.

Age: 37

Home town: Hervey Bay, Queensland

Current town: Sunshine Coast, Queensland

Competing in: Indoor rowing, powerlifting and swimming

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have a fractured vertebrae and a traumatic brain injury which includes a tumor/cyst on my brain and hypogonadism.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Training for an event like this, has given me a long-term goal I otherwise wouldn't have had. Strength training has helped my injuries and allowed me to focus on other things, rather than being upset at having chronic conditions.

Sport background: Growing up I played rugby league, touch football and did boxing.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Being selected to represent Special Operations Command and the ADF while attached to United States Special Operations Command Africa in Germany for six months.

Why did you apply for the Invictus Games? I was in a very bad mental place after leaving such a highly driven workforce and this was affecting my family dynamic and ability to rehabilitate. I applied for the Invictus Games to meet people in similar situations and hopefully receive and pass on coping mechanisms. I also wanted to feel physically and mentally capable to achieve good results like I used to.

What will success look like for you at the Games? I'm generally a competitive person and winning would be absolutely incredible. Winning, I hope, will give me the drive to continue to compete locally in similar events and hopefully represent Australia again in the future.

What does unconquered mean to you? Although I have chronic and debilitating physical and mental issues, it doesn't mean it's all over. I still have the ability and drive to compete with other people in my situation and receive just as much, if not more, satisfaction from it.

Brooke Mead

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy as a Communication Information Systems Sailor at age 18 in 2011. As a Patrol Boat Sailor, I spent much of my service being deployed on Operation Resolute (Australia's effort to protect our borders and offshore maritime interests). I was medically discharged in 2016.

Current occupation: I am a volunteer content creator and influencer for the Invictus Games Foundation. My updates and presence is on the We Are Invictus social media pages.

Age: 30

Home town: Taree, New South Wales

Current town: North Brisbane, Queensland

Competing in: Indoor rowing, powerlifting and table tennis

What is the nature of your injury or illness? As a result of my service, I struggle with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder stemming from my involvement in body recoveries and search and rescue missions. In addition, I sustained a spinal cord injury that progressively worsened and necessitated the insertion of a Spinal Cord Stimulator. However, through the power of sport, I was able to have it removed. More recently, I underwent an Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) reconstruction.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has helped me regain control of my life and to realise my self-worth. Before returning to sport, I was on a path of self-destruction. Today, I can confidently say I am the best version of myself. For me, sport is non-negotiable and acts as a guiding compass towards achieving my goals and visions.

Sport background: Sport was the foundation of my childhood; I grew up playing netball, touch football and swimming. While I was serving, I was on the navy dragon boating team. Nowadays, I use CrossFit, strength training, and snowboarding to assist my recovery.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? For the better part of a decade, the physical pain and mental anguish from my injuries was debilitating. I allowed myself to adopt a victim mentality, and my life was at a standstill. I craved a challenge that would be powerful enough to transform my life, and for me, the Invictus Games was that challenge.

What will success look like for you at the Games? As I continue my ascent from rock bottom, I have given myself no option but to win. Success at the Invictus Games isn't a gold medal, it is firmly believing I have been relentless in my pursuit for personal growth. I have failed at too many things in my life and I will not let this be another.

What does unconquered mean to you? Sometimes we lose ourselves for a while, and that's okay; so long as we do not accept defeat, only then are we truly unconquered.

Lenny Redrose

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in 2012 and discharged in 2016 with the rank of Private. My unit was Joint Movement Coordination Centre (JMCC) based in Brisbane. I was fortunate enough to be sent on two operations: Operation Queensland Flood Assist and Operation Philippines Assist. Operation Philippines Assist was my career highlight by far. Being in a high-pressure environment brought out the best of my character and training. The Philippines had been hit by a cyclone which was a massive eye opener. This operation taught me how resilient people can be.

Age: 37

Home town: Melbourne, Victoria

Current town: Melbourne, Victoria

Competing in: Wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby and cycling

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I am a T4 paraplegic complete. In October 2016 I walked into surgery and came out the other side with spinal cord damage from the chest down. I don't have any voluntary movement, no sensory feeling, lack of control of my bowel and bladder and I suffer with severe chronic neuropathic pain on daily basis.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? I had always been into sport pre-paraplegia, playing soccer at a very high level in Australia. In the early days of my recovery, I was still struggling with a crystal methamphetamine addiction which had lasted for 12 years on and off. I went into some dark places which I never want to see again. My mentor Marcus, who I was introduced to while in spinal rehabilitation, played a crucial part in my change of lifestyle. He gave me some tough love at a time when I really needed to be pointed in the right direction. That direction led me to try out for the Victorian Wheelchair Football League. I was drafted to the St Kilda Football Club and with this opportunity my life took the most positive step. I have since been part of four Spartan Races, Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Half Marathon and various other sporting events. I now put sport and health first. It's become my addiction and I have been able to live the happiest life ever. Sport really saved my life.

Sport background: I was at the Victorian Institute of Sport on a full scholarship at age 15 for soccer and was awarded the Australian Youth Soccer Player of the Year. I now play Wheelchair AFL.

What is your greatest achievement to date? My goal has been to change the narrative around people with disabilities. My spinal cord injury has showed me another side to life I never thought I would see. For over four years now I have been in control of my life, my drug addiction and my choices. My greatest achievement to date is that I'm not a slave to my addiction. I love the life I live as I went from negative to positive.

Why did you apply for the Invictus Games? Since the Games began, I kept saying I was going to make the team one day. However, they were loose comments as mentally I was not ready. Roughly one year later I was in the window of opportunity and applied for the team. While waiting to see if I would get a call up, I trained non-stop and that improved my physical and mental health. I had a goal which kept me focused on a positive path.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Success for me is everyone getting involved and breaking their own barriers. I love seeing people do amazing things and everyone at these Games will be doing just that.

What does unconquered mean to you? What I have been able to do with my life. My life hasn't been easy, from growing up in very low economic conditions, drug addiction and spinal cord injury; however, I never gave up. Unconquered to me is being The Smiling Cripple.

Laura Reynell

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Navy as a Boatswains Mate. During my service I deployed to South East Asia twice and around Australia. I was medically discharged in 2020.

Current occupation: Studying interior design online and renovating my home.

Home town: Cleveland, Queensland

Current town: Jervis Bay, New South Wales

Competing in: Archery, powerlifting and rowing

What is the nature of your injury or illness? During my deployment in 2017 I was badly injured by a machine gun. This resulted in countless surgeries, twice learning to walk again, having my foot fully pinned and 12 months later having a joint replacement on that same foot. I still suffer from intense nerve damage in my leg and lower back, along with not being able to feel my right foot at all.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has always been my biggest outlet even when I was a little kid, so losing that to the point where I couldn't get out of bed until my partner came home from work, put me in a pretty dark place. I started to believe I had lost who I was and would never be happy again.

Once I started the journey of learning to walk and getting my independence back, I started looking at local gyms to join, even if it meant I could only go for 20 minutes at the start. I joined a local pilates studio to help re learn balance and strength. The endorphins exercise gave me helped get me back to "who I was" before my accident.

Sport has played an integral part of my rehabilitation, but if there's any advice I could give other people, it is make sure you find "your people". I'm not sure if I just got really lucky with my gym, pilates and footy family, but if I hadn't met them, I don't think I would have recovered as well. They never judged me or looked at me any different and I think that played a major role in me just going through the motions in learning what was the "new me" as it was a safe place where I didn't feel different or judged.

Sport background:

Growing up I played competitive soccer, touch football, swimming and athletics. Before my accident I was playing local and representative touch football, I had also just started cross-fit. It took around three years after my accident before I could start going to cross-fit again. Since then, I have played touch football again and even made representative teams along with doing local crossfit competitions with friends for fun.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Realising who I was before my accident doesn't mean I'm any less of a person now. All the obstacles I have faced at 28 years of age has only made me stronger. It was and still is a long road ahead but there is nothing I'm not capable of achieving now.

Why did you apply for the Invictus Games? I feel like I have come a long way in my rehabilitation and training. I'm now in the right place mentally and physically and I wanted to prove to myself how far I have come and be proud of it. I wanted to meet people that had also been through difficulties and overcome them.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Meeting new people, making new friends, forming new memories and hearing everyone's stories. Putting in 100% to show myself how far I have come since my accident and to be proud of this achievement.

What does unconquered mean to you? To not allow what has happened to you to define you or let it defeat or overcome you. You are not defined by what has happened to you, instead you are what you do afterwards.

Stephen Richards

ADF service: I joined the Army in 2005 as a Fitter Armament before transferring to the Royal Australian Air Force as a Ground Mechanical Engineering Fitter. I was medically discharged in 2022.

Current occupation: I work at Defence Force Recruiting.

Age: 40

Home town: Christchurch, New Zealand

Current town: Maitland, New South Wales

Competing in: Archery, table tennis and wheelchair basketball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have a lot of chronic back issues from torn discs, dehydrated discs and spondylosis. I also have mental health injuries from living with chronic pain for around 15 years.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has been my happy place, in particular archery. It helps me wind down and focus.

Sport background: I have been involved with archery for 26 years. I have also helped start a couple of clubs, Port Stephens Archers and the Air Force Archery Association.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Still being alive after all the crazy things I've done.

Why did you apply for the Invictus Games? To network with other veterans and the opportunity to represent my country again.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Walking away knowing I did my best and celebrating that.

What does unconquered mean to you? Unconquered always reminds of Stoicism. It's a philosophy I try to model my life around. To be unconquered is all in the mind.

“Objective judgement, now at this very moment. Unselfish action, now at this very moment. Willing acceptance, now at this very moment, of all external events. That’s all you need.” - Marcus Aurelius

Verity Sanchez

ADF service: I enlisted in the Australian Army in 1997 and was medically discharged in 2014. I deployed on Operation Sumatra Assist to Indonesia following the 2004 Boxing Day tsunamis. I also participated in numerous international and joint exercises here in Australia and overseas

Current occupation: I am an analyst for a technology company.

Age: 45

Home town: Adelaide, South Australia

Current town: Adelaide, South Australia

Competing in: Athletics, swimming and table tennis

What is the nature of your injury or illness? As a result of my service I have cervical spondylosis, strain in my thoracic spine, bursitis in both shoulders and osteoarthritis in both knees.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport has played a pivotal role in my rehabilitation. Through participating in the University of South Australia's Invictus Pathways Program, I have gained back my confidence to participate and interact with sport and exercise again. Participating in sport provides me with motivation to really work at my rehabilitation, through routine and goal setting, which has resulted in improved pain management and physical mobility. As a result, I am increasingly able to get out and about to enjoy and participate in life and achieve awesome things such as being a part of the Australian Invictus Games team.

Sport background: Swimming was my first sport. I learned to swim at the same time I learnt to walk. I loved swimming, but then one of my primary school teachers put a hockey stick in my hands and swimming took second place. I represented South Australia in U16s hockey. I was part of ADF state and national teams. My injuries mean I will never be able to play hockey again, but swimming and being in the pool is not only doable but crucial to my rehabilitation.

What is your greatest achievement to date? I love to learn. I try to learn something new every day. Through my love of learning, I have earned numerous degrees. Why I consider this part of my greatest achievement to date is because I have succeeded in earning these while working full time, dealing with my injuries, discharging from the ADF and being a mother. I feel my hard work, perseverance and open-mindedness in achieving these has set a positive example for my daughter.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? To be a part of a great event, challenge myself both physically and mentally, and take my rehabilitation to the next level. It is truly humbling and an absolute honour to have been selected to represent Australia.

What will success look like for you at the Games? Having been selected to represent Australia already feels like success to me. However, stepping up onto the blocks, lining up on the start line, and standing behind the table wearing the green and gold and then giving it my absolute all will be success.

What does unconquered mean to you? It is eloquently stated by J.R.R Tolkien:

“It is not the strength of the body that counts, but the strength of the spirit”.

Adam Slot

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in 1992 and was medically discharged in 2021. I served in multiple units as both an Infantryman and an Armored Corps Soldier. I also served four years in the Royal Australian Navy. I completed selection for the Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) in 2002. I deployed on multiple operational deployments including Afghanistan, Iraq, the Middle East, East Timor, Asia, Africa and participated in numerous domestic counter terrorism duties.

Current occupation: Retired.

Age: 48

Hometown: Hobart, Tasmania

Current Town: Perth, Western Australia

Competing in: Indoor rowing, sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have numerous injuries and illnesses as a result of my service.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? It has helped me reconnect with myself and others with a sense of purpose. It has helped me set goals by giving me a routine.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Serving in the Special Air Service Regiment.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? To support my rehabilitation and recovery alongside others who are also wounded, injured and ill. I wanted to be part of a team and meet new people and work towards a common goal together.

What will success look like for you at the Games? To be around like-minded people with a common goal and feeling part of a team.

What does unconquered mean to you? To not allow injury or illness defeat you.

Colleen Swifte

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army as a Signaller in 1999 and discharged in 2006.

Age: 43

Home town: Brisbane, Queensland

Current town: Brisbane, Queensland

Competing in: Cycling, Sitting Volleyball and Wheelchair Basketball

What is the nature of your injury or illness? Knee injury and Post Traumatic Stress.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Leaving the Army with a knee and shoulder injury left me feeling frustrated that my body couldn't do all the things it used to do. I also struggled with my mental health. I took up cycling when I saw other veterans getting so much out of the sport. It has been amazing for strengthening my knee post surgeries and can be quite calming for the mind. I have developed some strong friendships within the cycling community. I volunteer for a school bicycle program and have worked as a bicycle mechanic.

Sport background: I have always enjoyed playing sport but have not been seriously involved in any teams. Some achievements include being my high school Sports Captain and starting a women's rugby team at one of my units in the Army. I have played touch football and now race in cycling events.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Perhaps not my greatest achievement but an important one in this context is choosing to be part of the Invictus Games. Coming from the military where physical fitness and mental fortitude are revered it is not easy to put yourself into the public realm and out yourself as having mental health struggles. I am proud to have done that.

Why did you apply for the Invictus Games? I saw the positive effect that training for and competing at Invictus Games 2017 and 2018 had on other veterans. It inspired me to have a go. I felt the supportive and understanding team environment would be a great place to develop fitness and skills within my limitations and provide a foundation for ongoing participation in sport.

What will success look like for you at the Games? I would love to be the fastest or the strongest, but I will be satisfied if I'm still smiling when I finish and have enjoyed the company of my fellow competitors.

What does unconquered mean to you? Not giving up. Persevering through difficulty and, if one does fail, having the courage to start again.

Andrew Tebbit

ADF service: I joined the Australian Army in 2000 as a Combat Engineer I deployed in 2002 and 2006 to East Timor. I spent two years providing Explosive Ordnance disposal support to the Tactical Assault Group. I medically discharged in 2015.

Age: 47

Home town: Ipswich, Queensland

Current town: Port Macquarie, New South Wales

Competing in: Cycling, indoor rowing and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? I have a below knee amputation as a result of an Army injury that wasn't able to be fixed by surgery. I made the choice with my surgeon to amputate for a better quality of life. I have adjustment disorder with major depressive disorder and anxiety from not being able to deal with my decline in physical health and the effect it had on my career in the Army.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? I moved to Port Macquarie after I discharged and was at a pretty low point. I was fortunate enough to meet a member of the Australian Paralympic Wheelchair Rugby Team and was invited to a training session. Just being involved in those training sessions around elite athletes completely changed my outlook and made me a better person.

Sport background: I played rugby league when I was younger. Now I do outrigger canoeing and some rowing.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Getting three Australian adaptive indoor rowing records eight months after my amputation.

Why did you apply for the Invictus Games? To be around other military people who may have been through similar things as me and to compete in sports in which I may not have had the chance elsewhere.

What will success look like for you at these Games? Just being there and being able to share it with family and friends who have had to ride the ups and downs with me.

What does unconquered mean to you? That I'm not defined by my limitations.

Karl Woodward

ADF service: I joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 2007 and discharged in 2023. I deployed across the Middle East whilst serving on Operations Slipper and Accordion between 2010-2020. I deployed on Operation Aslan as part of Australia's small contingent to support the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. I was fortunate to travel across Australia, Asia, the United States and New Zealand during my career.

Age: 42

Hometown: Terrigal, New South Wales

Current Town: Terrigal, New South Wales

Competing in: Indoor rowing, swimming and wheelchair rugby

What is the nature of your injury or illness? Chronic back pain and mental health.

What role has sport played in your rehabilitation? Sport plays a vital role in my rehabilitation for both my physical and mental injuries. Over the years I have maintained a decent level of fitness, so keeping fit has always been a part of me and never been a problem. Sport is now helping me maintain purpose, focus and discipline in my everyday life; which ultimately helps my rehabilitation during post service life.

Sport background: Before joining the Air Force I was a competitive swimmer for Gosford Stingrays at state and national level. I also competed as a Surf Life Saver in my local branch for the North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club. Whilst serving I completed at the ADF Water Polo Inter Service Championships, where I represented Far North Queensland and competed in the Air Force Surfing Championships. My biggest achievement in sport has been my recent performance in the 2022 Australian Indoor Rowing Championships where I placed 3rd in the 1000 metres.

What is your greatest achievement to date? Serving on the United Nation Mission in South Sudan and serving with the men and women of 77 Squadron as a junior officer between 2011-2013.

Why did you apply for Invictus Games? Ultimately, I wanted to challenge myself during my medical discharge and rehabilitation, reignite my passion for sport and to meet like-minded veterans.

What will success look like for you at the Games? I felt I had already won when I was asked to try out for the Australian Team at the selection camp in 2022. I feel that turning up to train either alone or with fellow Aussie teammates is a win in my book.

What does unconquered mean to you? To never give up, no matter what circumstances I am surrounded by.